DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 382 394 PS 023 297

AUTHOR Hicks, Lynley; And Others
TITLE Social Goals and Achievement Goals in Early Adolescence.
INSTITUTION Michigan Univ., Ann Arbor. School of Education.
SPONS AGENCY National Center for School Leadership, Urbana, IL.; Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Mar 95
NOTE 16p.; Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (61st, Indianapolis, IN, March 30-April 2, 1995). This research was conducted in cooperation with Middle School Coalition Project.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Early Adolescents; Grade 7; Junior High Schools; *Junior High School Students; Middle Schools; Objectives; *Peer Relationship; Sex Differences; *Social Responsibility; *Student Attitudes; Student Educational Objectives
IDENTIFIERS Middle School Students

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between students' self-reported goals of being socially responsible and of forming relationships with peers, to their achievement goals in English and mathematics. The sample consisted of 175 male and 138 female seventh-graders from a predominantly white, lower middle-class middle school. The study found that social responsibility goals were positively related to task goals and relative ability goals, and negatively related to extrinsic goals. Students who aimed to be socially responsible were likely to engage in their academic work to gain a personal sense of mastery or to demonstrate their ability in comparison to others, and not out of a desire to get extrinsic rewards such as grades. Social relationship goals were found to be positively related to both task goals and relative ability goals. Social relationship and extrinsic goals were unrelated in English and were negatively related in math. In addition, gender was a significant predictor of extrinsic and relative ability goals, with males being more likely to pursue extrinsic goals. Contains 16 references. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 382 394

Social Goals and Achievement Goals in Early Adolescence.

Lynley Hicks, Allison M. Murphy, and Helen Patrick

Combined Program in Education and Psychology

The University of Michigan.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Lynley Hicks

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

Poster presented at the bi-annual meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, March 1995, Indianapolis.

This research is conducted in conjunction with The Middle School Coalition project and is funded by the National Center for School Leadership at the University of Illinois through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Department of Education.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Lynley Hicks
1400G School of Education
610 E. University Ave
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259

PS 023297

ABSTRACT

Early adolescence is a time characterized by a drop in achievement motivation and an increased interest in peer relationships. This study examines the relationship between students' self-reported goals of being socially responsible and of forming relationships with peers, to their achievement goals in two subject domains. The sample consisted of 175 male and 138 female students in 7th grade from a predominantly White, lower middle class Middle School. Different patterns of prediction were found for each of three achievement goals: task goals, extrinsic goals and relative ability goals. In addition, gender was a significant predictor of extrinsic and relative ability goals. The importance of considering adolescents' social goals in studies of achievement motivation is discussed.

Social goals and achievement goals in early adolescence.

Early adolescence is a time often characterized by a drop in students' achievement motivation (Eccles, Wigfield, Flanagan, Miller, Reuman, & Yee, 1989; Eccles & Midgley, 1989). Recently, a number of researchers have adopted a goal orientation framework to examine student motivation (e.g., Ames, 1992; Maehr & Anderman, 1993). Students' achievement goal orientation has been shown to be related to a number of educational outcomes, such as a willingness to engage in challenging tasks, the use of self-regulated learning strategies, and having positive feelings about school (Ames & Archer, 1988; Nolen, 1988). In this study, goals are differentiated as task-focused goals[1], relative ability goals and extrinsic goals. A task-focused goal concerns gaining understanding, insight or skill; learning is an end in itself. A relative ability goal concerns being judged able and ability is demonstrated by outperforming others, or by achieving success with little effort. An extrinsic goal concerns receiving rewards or recognition or avoiding punishment.

In addition to achievement goals, students' endorsement of social responsibility goals (i.e., goals of complying with social norms) have been shown to be positively related to the grades students receive from their teachers (Wentzel, 1989). In the current study, social responsibility goals were conceptualized somewhat differently from that earlier work. For example, Wentzel defines goals in terms of behavior and asks about the frequency of actually doing things. That is, "Effort to attain ... goals was measured by asking students how often they tried to achieve each goal .... Responses concerning effort were made on a three-point scale (rarely, sometimes, and always)." (Wentzel 1989, p. 133). We define goals as a cognitive construct; an intended and desired outcome which may or may not match actual behavior. This conceptualization is

consistent with the way in which achievement goals were measured here and elsewhere (see, e.g., Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995). In addition, Wentzel's conceptualization of social responsibility has been criticized as representing conformity to teachers' values (Jussim, 1991). To address this concern, we added items to expand the construct, including some items that relate specifically to the goal of maintaining harmony when working in groups. This aspect of social motivation seems increasingly important for school students, given current moves in education to increase the use of cooperative group settings for instruction (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

Given the increased interest in and importance of peer relationships during early adolescence (Berndt & Keefe, 1992; Brown, 1989), it seems important also to examine students' social goals in terms of friendship and acceptance (e.g., desiring companionship, intimacy). Arguably a greater investment in and commitment to peer relationships may detract from a commitment to academic task goals. Our conceptualization of social relationship goals (including the desire for intimacy, trust and sharing) is an extension of Wentzel's (1989) social interaction goals (making and keeping friends, and having fun). Our addition of goals for creating and sustaining peer relationships, however, includes a mechanism for explaining the negative relationship between social interaction goals and grades - investment in the social arena may compromise one's investment in task-focused learning.

The aim of this study was to explore the relationships between early adolescents' social goals and their pursuit of different achievement goals. It was hypothesized that both social responsibility and social relationship goals would predict students' achievement goals.

METHOD

Subjects: The sample consisted of 175 male and 138 female students in 7th grade, from a predominantly White, lower middle class Middle School.

Instruments: All scales were administered as part of a larger survey. Sample items and scale information for all measures are shown in Table 1.

Achievement Goals Measures of the three achievement goals (task, relative ability and extrinsic) are described in the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (Midgley, Maehr, & Urdan, 1993). These were measured separately for English and Math.

Social Goals A pool of items was generated to measure students' social goals. To assess social responsibility, some items related to following teacher instructions and working quietly and consistently were adapted from Wentzel (1989). Other items, related to working cooperatively in groups were also included. See Table 1 for sample items. The measure for social relationship goals was adapted from one used previously with 7th and 8th grade students (Hicks & Murphy, in preparation) and included items related to forming and maintaining close friendships in school. A principal components factor analysis, with varimax rotation, revealed two factors which supported our differentiation between social responsibility and social relationship goals. These two factors account for 41% of the variance in the items.

Analysis of variance revealed that girls were more likely to endorse both social responsibility and social relationship goals than were boys (both $p<.001$), therefore students' gender was included in later analyses.

RESULTS

The correlations between all five students' goals, for English and Math, are shown in Tables 2 and 3. In the discussion below, reported results are shown for English and Math respectively, in each instance.

Social responsibility goals were positively related to task goals ($r=+.55$ and $+.51$, $p<.01$) and relative ability goals ($r=+.22$ and $+.14$, $p<.01$) and negatively related to extrinsic goals ($r=-.25$ and $-.40$, $p<.01$). Students who aim to be socially responsible are likely to engage in their academic work to gain a personal sense of mastery or to demonstrate their ability in comparison to others, and not out of a desire to gain extrinsic rewards such as grades.

Social relationship goals were positively related to both task goals ($r =+.22$ and $+.17$, $p<.01$) and relative ability goals ($r=.+25$ and $+.24$, $p<.01$). Social relationship and extrinsic goals were unrelated in English and were negatively related in Math ($r=-.11$, $p<.05$). Thus, students who are concerned with maintaining peer relationships are likely to engage in their academic work out of a desire to develop understanding or mastery, or to demonstrate their ability in comparison to others.

Students who indicated they endorsed social responsibility goals were also likely to endorse social relationship goals ($r=+.54$, $p<.01$).

Students' social responsibility goals, their social relationship goals, and gender were entered into simultaneous regression equations, separately for each of the three achievement goals. This analysis was conducted separately for the two subject domains, English and Math. Results of these analyses are summarized

in Table 4. To check for interaction effects, cross-product terms were created from the predictor variables and were entered into each equation. No significant first-order interactions were found.

Several interesting trends are evident. Firstly, the pattern of results is the same for both subject area domains. Secondly, social responsibility and social relationship goals predicted each of the three achievement goals differently.

The strongest pattern of prediction was found for students' task goals (Adj. Rsq = .31 and .28, in English and math respectively, both $p<.001$). Engaging in academic work with the aim of learning and understanding was positively related to endorsing social responsibility goals and negatively related to social relationship goals. Gender was not a significant predictor of task goals.

In contrast, pursuing extrinsic goals, that is engaging in academic work to receive rewards such as grades or to avoid negative consequences, were predicted positively by social relationship goals and negatively by social responsibility goals. It should be noted that the association between social relationship goals and extrinsic goals suggested by the multiple regression analysis contrasts with that found in the bivariate analysis (see Tables 2 and 3). This suggests that a suppression effect may be occurring and, thus, this finding should be interpreted cautiously. Gender was also a significant predictor of extrinsic goals, with males being more likely to pursue extrinsic goals.

Both social relationship goals and social responsibility goals were positively related to the pursuit of relative ability goals. Furthermore, gender was again a significant predictor, with males being more likely to pursue relative ability goals. The constructs

included in this study, however, did not predict a large amount of the variance in relative ability goals, suggesting that some other variables are influential in students' concern for social comparison. This finding is particularly interesting, given that achievement goals related to appearing better than one's peers would seem to represent some intersection between social and academic domains.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study offer support for two hypotheses. Firstly, they demonstrate that early adolescents' social goals can be usefully differentiated into responsibility and relationship goals. Secondly, they demonstrate that both social relationship and social responsibility goals are associated with students' achievement goals. While social responsibility goals were stronger predictors of task and extrinsic goals, social relationship goals were shown to explain additional variance in task and relative ability goals. The positive relationship between social relationship goals and relative ability goals initially may seem counter-intuitive; that is, that students who want to affiliate with their peers also want to outperform them. This finding, however, may suggest that some students are particularly focused on their peers - both as a source of social support and as a norm against which to assess their abilities. That is, there may be some adolescents for whom the peer group is an especially salient source of information and validation. While these suggestions are interesting, however, it must be recalled that only a small amount of the variance in relative ability goals was predicted by the variables in this study. Clearly, some other characteristics of both individual students and classroom contexts must be considered in understanding relative ability goals.

The strong relationship between social responsibility and task goals is interesting, since holding task goals, irrespective of the extent of extrinsic goals, has been shown to be related to the use of adaptive learning strategies (Ames & Archer, 1988, Hicks & Murphy, in preparation). The strong association between social responsibility and task goals identified in this study, and the documented association between task goals and adaptive learning strategies, may account for Wentzel's (1989) finding that social responsibility goals were a significant predictor of grades. The negative relationship between social relationship and task goals suggests that students tend to invest in pursuing either social relationships or engagement in academic tasks. While previous research does not appear to have addressed social relationship goals, it is possible that they are associated with the use of different, and less adaptive, learning strategies than are social responsibility goals.

It is interesting to note that no differences occurred between subject area domains, in the current study. This finding contrasts with other research which has found that students' perceptions vary across domains (e.g., Stodolsky, Salk, & Glaessner, 1991). One possible explanation is that the questionnaire measure used here was insufficiently sensitive to different class contexts to reveal such differences. While the achievement goal items were worded specifically with regard to Math and English classes (e.g., "I do my work in English because the teacher says I have to, not because I want to.") they were administered in one sitting and may not have elicited differential responding. Furthermore, the social goal items were not asked in relation to a specific setting. An exploration of domain differences in the relationships between social and achievement motivation may require a more contextualized measure.

In conclusion, while the current findings are preliminary, they support the importance of on-going exploration of early adolescents' social motivation and its relationship to

achievement motivation. Given the increased interest students display as they enter adolescence, their goals for peer relationships may be particularly important during this stage of life.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE ITEMS, NUMBER OF ITEMS AND INTERNAL CONSISTENCY COEFFICIENTS FOR SOCIAL AND ACHIEVEMENT GOAL SCALES.

Scale	Sample items	# items	a
	All items were rated 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly disagree.		for two domains
Social relationship goal	I would like to have a friend at school that I can confide in. I would like to get to know my school friends really well. I'd like to keep promises I've made to other kids.	7	.77
Social responsibility goal	I want to do what the teacher asks me to do. I want to keep working even when other students are goofing off. When I'm with a group of other people, I like everyone in the group to feel happy with what we do.	7	.83
Task goal	In this class, understanding the work is more important to me than the grades I get In this class I like work that I'll learn from, even if I make a lot of mistakes.	4	.78 - .85
Relative ability goal	I would feel really good if I were the only one who could answer the teacher's questions in this class. In this class, I'd like to show the teacher I'm smarter than the other students.	3	.75- .79
Extrinsic goal	I do my work in this class because the teacher says I have to, not because I want to. The main reason I do my work for this class is because we get grades.	3	.64 - .71

TABLE 2. ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS FOR SOCIAL AND ACHIEVEMENT GOALS FOR ENGLISH.

	Task goals	Extrinsic	Relative Ability	Social Responsibility	Social Relationship
Task	1.00				
Extrinsic	-.50**	1.00			
Relative Ability	+.12*	+.34**	1.00		
Social Responsibility	+.55**	-.25**	+.22**	1.00	
Social Relationship	+.22**	+.04	+.25**	+.54**	1.00

TABLE 3. ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS FOR SOCIAL AND ACHIEVEMENT GOALS FOR MATH.

	Task goals	Extrinsic	Relative Ability	Social Responsibility	Social Relationship
Task	1.00				
Extrinsic	-.56**	1.00			
Relative Ability	-.09	+.39**	1.00		
Social Responsibility	+.51**	-.40**	+.14*	1.00	
Social Relationship	+.17**	-.11*	+.24**	+.54**	1.00

TABLE 4 PREDICTORS OF ACHIEVEMENT GOALS IN MATH AND ENGLISH.

ACHIEVEMENT GOALS		PREDICTOR	b	Adj. Rsq
Task goals	Math	responsibility goal	+.602***	.28***
		relationship goal	-.159**	
		gender	-.006 (n.s.)	
	English	responsibility goal	+.620***	.31***
		relationship goal	-.120*	
		gender	-.006 (n.s.)	
Extrinsic goals	Math	responsibility goal	-.464***	.18***
		relationship goal	+.175**	
		gender	-.128*	
	English	responsibility goal	-.364***	.12***
		relationship goal	+.286***	
		gender	-.162**	
Relative ability goals	Math	responsibility goal	+.024 (n.s.)	.08***
		relationship goal	+.281***	
		gender	-.171**	
	English	responsibility goal	+.143*	.10***
		relationship goal	+.225***	
		gender	-.187**	

Note: gender coded 0=male, 1=female. * p.<.05, ** p.<.01, *** p.<.001

REFERENCES

Ames, C. (1992). Classrooms: Goals, structures, and student motivation. Journal of Educational Psychology, 84, 261-271.

Ames, C., & Archer, J. (1988). Achievement goals in the classroom: Student learning strategies and motivation processes. Journal of Educational Psychology, 80, 260-267.

Berndt, T.J., & Keefe, K. (1992). Friends' influence on adolescents' perceptions of themselves at school. In D. Schunk & J. Meece (Eds.), Student perceptions in the classroom (pp. 51-73). Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.

Brown, B. B. (1989). The role of peer groups in adolescents' adjustment to secondary school. In D. Belle (Ed.), Children's social networks and social supports (pp. 188-215). New York: Wiley.

Dweck, C. (1986). Motivational processes affecting learning. American Psychologist, 41, 1040-1048.

Eccles, J. S., & Midgley, C. (1989). Stage-environment fit: Developmentally appropriate classrooms for young adolescents. In C. Ames & R. Ames (Eds.), Research on motivation in education: Vol. 3. Goals and cognitions (pp. 139-186). San Diego: Academic Press.

Eccles, J. S., Wigfield, A., Flanagan, C. A., Miller, C., Reuman, D. A., & Yee, D. (1989). Self-concepts, domain values, and self-esteem: Relations and changes at early adolescence. Journal of Personality, 57, 283-310.

Hicks, L., & Murphy, A. M. (in preparation). Social and achievement goals and academic self-regulation in adolescents. Paper to be presented at the American Educational Research Association annual conference. San Francisco.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1989). Cooperation and competition: Theory and research. Edina, Minnesota: Interaction Book Co.

Jussim, L. (1991). Grades may reflect more than performance: Comment on Wentzel (1989). Journal of Educational Psychology, 83, 153-155.

Maehr, M.L., & Anderman, E.M. (1993). Reinventing schools for early adolescents: Emphasizing task goals. Elementary School Journal, 93, 593-610.

Midgley, C., Anderman, E., & Hicks, L. (1995). Differences between elementary and middle school teachers and students: A goal theory approach. The Journal of Early Adolescence, 15, 90 - 113.

Midgley, C., Maehr, M. L., & Urdan, T. (1993). Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

Nolen, S.B. (1988). Reasons for studying: Motivational orientations and study strategies. Cognition and Instruction, 5, 269-287.

Stodolsky, S. S., Salk, S., & Glaessner, B. (1991). Student views about learning math and social studies. American Educational Research Journal, 28, 89-116.

Wentzel, K. R. (1989). Adolescent classroom goals, standards for performance, and academic achievement: An interactionist perspective. Journal of Educational Psychology, 81, 131-142.

Footnotes

1. These goals have been referred to elsewhere as mastery versus performance goal (Ames, 1992), task versus ego goal (Nolen, 1988) and learning versus performance goal (Dweck, 1986).